

# ***A REVIEW OF LAND REALLOCATION IN ZIMBABWE (1980-2000)***

**By**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Agriculture is the mainstay of the Zimbabwean economy and land is the key resource in agricultural production. During the colonial era in Zimbabwe, land was distributed along racial lines, approximately 4660 large scale commercial farms mainly white owned occupy 11.2 million ha and about 6 million black smallholder farmers occupy 16.4 million ha in mainly low agricultural potential areas (UNDP, 1998). Resolving the land issue is arguably one of the greatest challenges that face the Mugabe government. Since independence, the government has been undertaking programmes to reallocate land mainly from the white large-scale commercial farmers to the black smallholder farmers to address the inequities of the past. The objective of this paper is to review the progress to date. The paper begins with a description of land distribution over time and move on to review the land acquired and reallocated by the government since 1980. It also reviews the legislative and institutional framework and government financing of the land redistribution and resettlement programmes.

## 2. LAND DISTRIBUTION OVER TIME (1969-1997)

In 1969, the colonial government gazetted the Land Tenure Act, which replaced the Land Apportionment Act. Land was roughly divided equally between the Europeans and Africans. In real terms the division was unequal, as the whites constituted a minority group. According to (Bond-Stewart, 1986) an average white farmer owned about one hundred times more land than a black farmer did. The table 1 below shows the division of land according to the Land Tenure Act of 1969.

**Table 1: Division of Land according to the Land Tenure Act of 1969**

Land Category	European	African
	ha	Ha
Forest Area	753023	171635
General land	15580056	
Tribal Trust Land		16151905
Specially Designated Land	7370	117831
Purchase Area		1482991
Parks and Wildlife	1770913	254733
Total	18111362	18179095

Source: Riddell J.C and Dickerman C (1986)

When independence was attained the Tribal Trust Lands (TTLs) or native reserves were overpopulated by about 51% (Bond-Stewart, 1986). The new government led by Robert Mugabe embarked on the first phase of the Land Reform and Resettlement Programme (LRRP-1) to redress the inequities of the past and set itself ambitious targets for the programme. The government's initial target was to resettle 18,000 families on 1.2 million ha over three years, this was later increased to 162,000 families on 10 million ha due to political pressure (World Bank, 1991). By 1990, about 3.3 million ha of resettlement area had been established, see table 2 below. The slow speed of the land reallocation has been attributed to various reasons, which include the clauses entrenched in the Lancaster House Constitution (Hlatshwayo, 1993), which are covered later in this paper, prohibitive prices during the market oriented driven land reform and unsuitable land offered by white farmers in Natural Regions IV and V (GoZ, 1990; World Bank, 1991). Other authors (Bratton, 1994; Maposa, 1995; Mhishi, 1995) have attributed the slow progress to lack of political will on the part of government. Evidence for these assertions is the lack of adequate financing for land reallocation programmes, covered later in this paper. And also the government holding land or leasing or selling to selected individuals is used as evidence that it was not land, which was short, but effective resettlement schemes.

After the expiry of the Lancaster House Agreement in 1990, the government amended the entrenched clauses in the Constitution to remove the constraints to land transfer from white large-scale commercial farmers to black farmers.

**Table 2: Land Distribution after Independence**

Land Category	1980	1990	1997
	'000 000 ha	'000 000 ha	'000 000 ha
<sup>1</sup> Communal Areas <sup>a</sup>	16.4	16.4	16.4
<sup>1</sup> Resettlement Areas	0.0	3.3	3.6
<sup>2</sup> Small Scale Commercial Farms <sup>b</sup>	1.0	1.4	1.4
<sup>2</sup> Large Scale Commercial Farms <sup>c</sup>	14.8	11.4	11.3
<sup>1</sup> State Farms	0.3	-	0.1
<sup>1</sup> National Parks and Wildlife and Urban Settlements	6.0	6.0	6.0

Source: 1. GoZ (1999); 2. CSO (1998)

Notes on table 2:

- a. Communal areas formerly known as Tribal Trust Lands or Native Reserve.
- b. Small Scale Commercial Farms formerly known as Purchase Areas.
- c. Large Scale Commercial Farms formerly known as European Areas or General Land.

After the amending the Constitution, the government crafted a new National Land Policy in which new targets were put in place. The government sought to reduce the area under large-scale commercial farming to 5 million ha whilst increasing the area under resettlement to 8.3 million ha (Moyo, 1998). Other categories of land were to remain unchanged save for the state owned farms. As at 1997, the total area under resettlement had increased by only 300 000 ha to 3.6 million ha, which falls far short of the target and the large-scale sector had been reduced to 11.2 million ha.

### 3. LAND ACQUISITION

This section reviews the progress on land acquisition to date. The table 3 below shows the amount of land acquired on a yearly basis since 1980. A total of 3.56 million ha had been acquired for resettlement by December 2000.

**Table 3: List of farms acquired since 1980**

Year	No. of Farms	Extent (Ha)	Cost (Z\$)
1979-1980	76	176667	3477080
1980-1981	97	217869	4259607
1981-1982	313	922919	18290339
1982-1983	471	1016941	23287957
1983-1984	148	177716	5996789
1984-1985	67	75623	4444930
1985-1986	64	130292	5153010
1986-1987	70	191133	7091407
1987-1988	52	138349	5786315
1988-1989	51	78203	7255575
1989-1990	26	31050	7626150
1990-1991	28	34911	7952770
1991-1992	7	8275	3860000
1992-1993	35	48924	35526980
1993-1994	24	29964	19349500
1994-1995	27	42721	25470000
1995-1996	11	28575	8335000
1996-1997	10	34563	4810000
1997-1998	22	34873	65310000
1999	50	119953	171121000
2000	13	23346	100740000
<b>Total</b>	<b>1662</b>	<b>3562867</b>	<b>535144409</b>

Source: Ministry of Lands, Agriculture and Rural Resettlement Records, unpublished Files.

The government Land Acquisition reached a peak between 1981 and 1983, where about 54% of the total land to date. The process then slowed dramatically, even after the removal of the constitutional constraints in 1990. The government did not take advantage of the legislature it put in place. In 1993 seventy-three farms were designated for compulsory acquisition, none was acquired as 50 farms were delisted and the minister failed to comply with the period stated in the designation order for the remaining farms (CFU, 2000). Also in 1997 the government gazetted 1471 farms for compulsory acquisition, 624 were delisted for various reasons (Moyo, 1998), in the end the government managed to pay for only 22 farms of the remaining listed farms.

Recently, the government launched the “fast-track” approach to speed the pace of land acquisition and transfers under the Land Reform and Resettlement Programme phase 2 (LRRP-2). The main objective of the “fast-track” approach is to make up for the deficit of the target set in the National Land Policy. By December 2000, a total of 2540 farms with a total area of 5.88 million ha had been identified and gazetted for compulsory acquisition (Msika, 2000). The table 4 below gives a provincial breakdown of the gazetted farms:

**Table4: Farms gazetted for compulsory acquisition under the “fast-track approach”.**

Province	Number of Farms	Extent (ha)
Manicaland	159	1553998
Mashonaland Central	164	197173
Mashonaland East	693	663007
Mashonaland West	505	648903
Masvingo	249	1806250
Matabeleland North	187	8183306
Matabeleland South	208	861198
Midlands	375	731232
Total	2540	5880065

Source: Msika (2000)

#### **4. SETTLER EMPLACEMENT**

Before outlining the achievements on settler emplacements it will be worthwhile to give a brief description of the various resettlement models that were used for the placement of settlers. When the programme was launched there were five models used to place settlers. Below is brief description of the models:

##### *Model A (normal or intensive)*

This scheme involved nucleated villages in which an individual household was allocated a residential plot within a planned village, individual arable land and grazing land is communally owned. Settlers had an option to choose self-contained units.

##### *Model A (accelerated)*

Under this scheme settlers were placed with little or no infrastructure usually provided under the normal model A. This scheme was designed for the facilitation of rapid resettlement as the planning capacity of government fell short of the rate of land purchase in the early years of independence (World Bank, 1991).

This model has been revised under the second phase of the land reform programme. It now consists of two models A1 and A2. Model A1 is similar to the normal model A. In model A2, each individual household is allocated a consolidated farm unit ranging from 50 ha in the high agro-ecological regions (natural regions I and II) to 300 ha in the low potential (natural regions IV and V).

##### *Model B*

Under this model, settlers form cooperatives. It encompasses cooperative management and farming and communal living. Only livestock may be privately owned, but all other resources including land and equipment are jointly owned. This model has been removed from the framework of the current ongoing LRRP-2. The technical committee of the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Resettlement and Rural Development (IMCRD) in

inception phase framework plan for LRRP-2 recommended the deregistration of all cooperatives under this scheme and be replanned under models A1 and A2.

#### *Model C*

There is a core estate that provides production and marketing services to settlers. Individuals are allocated pieces of arable land and grazing is communally owned. A professional responsible for the coordination and organisation of production and marketing services manages the estate. Like model B, it has also been removed from the framework of the LRRP-2.

#### *Model D*

This scheme was designed for the low crop potential regions (natural regions IV and V). The model is mainly for livestock development activities in fenced rangelands with planned rotational grazing a major component of this model. Suitable arable land was allocated only when available. This model has also been revised for LRRP-2. It is now called the three-tier model. Instead of only livestock it now incorporates other land uses such as eco-tourism, wildlife management, ranching and agroforestry.

As at March 1997, 63,537 families had been resettled. The table 5 below shows the number families resettled under the various resettlement models. Model A has dominated the resettlement process with about 77% of the total number of families reallocated land under this model. The total number of families resettled by March 1997 constitutes only 40% of the target government set in 1980 to resettle 162,000 families in three years.

**Table 5: Settler emplacement as at March 1997**

Model	Area (ha)	Planned number of families	Actual number of families	Average Land per household
A	2663720	49387	49116	54
Self contained	73069	1507	736	48
B	167505	7450	3764	22
C	12962	636	636	20
3-tier	264988	0	0	
CAR	287549	9958	9285	28
Totals	3469793	68938	63537	50

Source: DDF unpublished files

Note: CAR – Communal Area Reorganisation

There has been an unequal distribution of resettlement in the various provinces of Zimbabwe. Manicaland had the largest area under resettlement amounting to about 19% the total area under resettlement as at March 1997. The table 6 below illustrates the area under resettlement in each province.

**Table 6: Provincial Distribution of area under resettlement as at March 1997**

Province	Area (ha)	Percentage of Total Area (%)
Manicaland	625246	18
Mashonaland Central <sup>a</sup>	410449	12
Mashonaland East	251326	7
Mashonaland West <sup>b</sup>	561617	16
Masvingo	426610	12
Midlands <sup>c</sup>	472201	14
Matabeleland North	198280	6
Matabeleland South	524065	15
Totals	3469793	100

Source: DDF unpublished files

Notes on table 6:

- a. includes 265,416 ha of communal area reorganisation
- b. includes 14,306 ha of communal area reorganisation
- c. includes 7,827 ha of communal area reorganisation.

## 5. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

Land reallocation is undertaken within a particular legislative framework. Section 16(1) of the Constitution of Zimbabwe states that: “ *No property of any description or interest or right therein shall be compulsorily acquired, except under authority of a law...* ” This section looks at the pieces of legislature that have been and are guiding land reallocation in Zimbabwe.

### *Lancaster House Constitution of 1979*

The Lancaster House Constitution was very restrictive in terms of acquisition of land for settlement and agricultural purposes provided by section 16. Only land that had not been used for a continuous period of at least five years could be compulsorily acquired for settlement and agricultural purposes. An adequate compensation was supposed to be paid promptly, not less than the highest price obtained in the open market “willing buyer, willing seller” during the five years prior to acquisition. At the option of the owner of the land those who suffer deprivation as a result of the action, compensation could be payable in foreign currency. Section 16 of the Lancaster House Constitution was one of the entrenched clauses that were only supposed to be amended only after a period of ten years had passed.

### *Land Acquisition Act of 1985*

Under this Act, still only underutilised and derelict (unused) land could be compulsorily acquired for settlement and agricultural purposes or on “willing buyer, willing seller” basis. All agricultural land for sale had to be offered to the government first. The acquiring authority had to pay adequate compensation promptly to the owner of the land and any other person suffering deprivation of rights as a result of the action. There were provisions to resort to the court in the event of disagreement on the compensation to be paid.

### *Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment Bill No. 11 of 1990*

The government amended section 16 of the Constitution, which related to the protection from deprivation of property. With this amendment, all land including utilised land, buildings and unexhausted improvement to land were now capable of being acquired compulsorily for settlement and agricultural purposes (Hansard, 1990 Vol.17 No. 58 pp. 2913 to 2916). As opposed to the Land Acquisition Act of 1985 when only underutilised and derelict land could be acquired for settlement and agricultural purposes. The compensation to be paid was shifted from “adequate” to “fair” and was supposed to be settled in reasonable time instead of immediately. Parliament was enacted to fix the compensation payable and the period it was supposed to be settled. The government removed under the court’s jurisdiction determination of fairness of compensation in the event of a disagreement. Lastly the remittance of compensation in foreign currency out of the country was abolished.

### *Land Acquisition Act of 1992*

The Land Acquisition Act of 1985 was replaced by the Act of 1992. After the amendment of the Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment Bill No.11, the aspects described in the previous section were incorporated in the Land Acquisition Act of 1992. In addition the government added a clause for the designation of rural land for settlement and other purposes. The clause empowered the Minister of Lands and Agriculture to designate any area or piece of land that will be acquired in terms of the Act. A compensation committee was established to determine the amount of compensation payable for designated rural land. The legislature provided for owners to make objections to designations through written representations to the Minister.

### *Land Acquisition Amendment Act of 2000*

After losing the referendum in February 2000, the government amended the Land Acquisition Act of 1992 mainly for political gains close to the June Parliamentary elections. The government removed its obligation to pay compensation in respect of agricultural land required for resettlement purposes. In terms of this new amended Act, compensation shall only be payable for any improvements on or to the land. Compensation for the land itself shall only be payable if an adequate fund established for such purposes is established in terms of section 16A of the Constitution of Zimbabwe. Although the composition of the compensation committee was altered, it retained the responsibility of fixing the amount of compensation payable.

## **6. INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK**

This section unpacks the institutions that have been involved in the reallocation of land in Zimbabwe. With the attainment of independence, the government launched the first phase of the Land Reform and Resettlement Programme (LRRP-1) that was implemented between 1980 and 1997. Under this programme the then Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rural Development was responsible for the overall policy, coordinating activities and initiating the purchase of land required. Other government departments were mainly involved in the provision of support services to resettled farmers. The Ministry of Agriculture was involved through the Department of Conservation (CONEX) in the investigations of the suitability of the land and preparation of resettlement plans. CONEX was later merged with Department of Agricultural Development (DEVAG) to form what is now known as Department of Agricultural and Technical Extension Services (AGRITEX).

Between 1980 and 1997, the overall responsibility of land acquisition and reallocation was switched from one ministry to another. In 1983 the Ministry of Lands, Resettlement and Rural Development was merged with Ministry of Agriculture to form the Ministry of Lands and Agriculture (MoLA). Other portfolios such as Ministry of Lands and Water Development have been established during first phase of the land reform programme as the "important" land acquisition continued to be shifted from one portfolio to the next. The Department of Rural Development (DERUDE), the leading implementing agency in the land reallocation programme was moved from the Ministry of Agriculture to the Ministry of Local Government, Rural and Urban Planning in 1984. Obviously these shifts and changes were accompanied by institutional adjustments and readjustments in the implementation process (Mhishi, 1995) which led to the slowing down of the programme. DERUDE was supposed to be merged with District Development Fund (DDF) when it was transferred, the merger only took place in 1995, 11 years after. As if this was not enough DDF was later shifted from the Ministry of Local Government to the Ministry of Rural Resources and Water Development.

In 1998, the government launched the second phase of the Land Reform and Resettlement Programme. The table 7 below outlines the institutional arrangements for the second phase of the programme.

## **7. GOVERNMENT FINANCING OF LAND ACQUISITION**

Although much has been said about land acquisition and reallocation, financing has not matched the political importance attached to the programmes. The table 8 below shows the budgetary allocations for land acquisition, Ministries of Agriculture and Defence and total government expenditure. Land acquisition allocation as a proportion of total government expenditure has averaged about 0.1% during the ESAP period (1991-1995). Financing of the programme declined soon after ESAP to about 0.03% of the total government expenditure. Funding of land acquisition has cast serious doubts as to whether the government is committed to land reallocation. In the millennium budget, land acquisition was allocated only \$200 million which was only enough to acquire 200 000 ha against a target of one million ha (ICFU, 1999). For the incoming year, 2001 the programme has been allocated \$1 billion dollars, about 0.4% of the total government expenditure, the highest since independence. This budget is for both land acquisition and resettlement. Even if the government confiscates the farms, the resources allocated are inadequate for resettlement.

**Table 7: Institutional Set Up, 1998**

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Composition</b>	<b>Role</b>
Cabinet Committee on Resettlement and Rural Development (CRD)	Ministers of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lands and Agriculture</li> <li>- Rural Resources and Water Development</li> <li>- National Affairs and Employment Creation</li> <li>- Finance</li> <li>- Mines, Environment And Tourism</li> <li>- Transport and Energy</li> <li>- National Economic Planning Commission (NEPC)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Coordinating body overseeing LRRP</li> <li>- reporting to Cabinet</li> <li>- policy issues and monitoring progress</li> </ul>
Working Party of CRD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Permanent Secretaries of above Ministers</li> <li>- Donor agencies</li> <li>- Rural District Councils (RDCs)</li> </ul>	- managerial role
Interministerial Committee On Resettlement (IMCRD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Donor agencies</li> <li>- Rural District Councils</li> <li>- Traditional leaders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Programme appraisal</li> <li>- planning and implementation</li> <li>- policy refinement</li> <li>- monitoring progress</li> </ul>
National Land Identification Committee (NLIC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provincial LICs</li> <li>- District LICs</li> <li>- Ruling Party</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Land identification</li> <li>- land acquisition</li> </ul>
National Economic Consultative Forum (NECF) Land Task Force	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Private Sector</li> <li>- NGOs</li> <li>- Farmers Unions (ZFU, CFU and ICFU)</li> <li>- Farm workers Organisations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- link between government and private sector</li> <li>- policy formulation</li> <li>- provide information</li> </ul>
Ministries and Departments Lands and Agriculture		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- acquires land and exercises overall inspectorate role through the Department of Lands and Technical Services</li> <li>- general policy framework</li> </ul>
Local Government and National Housing		- general policy framework for resettlement
Rural Resources and Water Development		- through District Development Fund (DDF), Infrastructure services such as Road, dip tanks and boreholes to Settlers
Minister Without Portfolio In the Office of President		coordinates the land identification through CRD and IMCRD
RDCs		- administer programme

Source: GoZ (1998)



**Table 8: Government Budgetary Allocations**

\$ Million	90-91	91-92	92-93	93-94	94-95	95-96	96-97	97-98	1999	2000	2001
BUDGETARY ALLOCATIONS	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
Land acquisition and infrastructural development	11.2	16.3	16.7	21.2	26.5	10	26	80	150	200	1000
Purchase and Compensation: Rural Land	10	15	15	20	26		26				
State land Infrastructural Development	1.2	1.3	1.7	1.2	0.5						
Agriculture	484	1100	1394	751	1043	633	1055	1458	1331	2798	4024
Defence	1031	1210	1377	1532	1885	2312	3172	5567	5420	15352	13293
Total Government Expenditure	9198	12317	15930	18058	26037	32596	35562	73207	65198	175322	2582390
Land acquisition as a proportion of Total Government Expenditure (%)	0.12	0.13	0.1	0.12	0.1	0.03	0.07	0.11	0.23	0.11	0.38
Agriculture as a proportion of Total Government Expenditure (%)	5.3	8.9	8.7	4.2	4	1.9	3.0	2.0	2.0	1.6	1.6

Source: Government Yearly Budget Estimates

## **8. CONCLUSION**

Government has been dragging its feet in as far as land reallocation is concerned. The effort it has put in this important subsector has not been convincing, from the financing of programmes to the use of legislature. This has cast serious doubts on whether there is political will to deal with the land issue once and for all.

Various commissions have been put in place by the government to chart the way forward on the land issue. Their output has been left to gather dust in government offices. For example, the Land Tenure Commission led by Rukuni in 1994 recommended the introduction of Land Tax, to discourage people from holding unutilised land and to accord security of tenure to smallholder farmers. But to date nothing has been taken up yet by the government.

Recently, the land reallocation has taken another twist. War veterans and supporters of the ruling party have been invading commercial farms “protesting” the slow pace of the land reallocation. This has been going on since the government lost the referendum for a new constitution. Some sections of society have dismissed farm invasions, which are usually accompanied by violence and terror as a political campaign strategy by the ruling party.

Land reallocation still remains as one of the greatest development challenges facing Zimbabwe, twenty years after independence. An amicable solution to the land issue will require effective participation of civil society, which has been watching mainly from the sidelines, private sector, non-governmental organisations and government as the custodian of society should take a leading role.

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